

NEW AGE

JUN/JUL 2017

PREGNANCY

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FLOW AND STEADY:

Simple Breast Massages To Increase Your Milk Flow

How To Get Baby To Latch On Properly?

"I was so badly engorged that it would hurt to put on my clothes!"

A mum's breastfeeding story



EXCLUSIVE PUMPING: WHEN YOU CAN'T BREASTFEED YOUR BABY

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MILKING FOR (LIQUID) GOLD

More mothers are now breastfeeding exclusively in hospitals. But we can't rejoice just yet. Because when it comes to mothers breastfeeding their baby after being discharged from the hospital, the figures are less promising.

The Health Promotion Board's National Breastfeeding Survey in 2011 revealed that less than 1 per cent of mothers were breastfeeding exclusively at six months; a stark contrast when compared to the 34 per cent of mothers in the UK, and 49 per cent in the US. The desired target for Singapore is 30 per cent.

For those who are planning to breastfeed beyond the recommended period of six months, we say go for it! In this issue, we spoke to a few experts for their tips and advice. From the benefits of latching in **Latch On, Latch Off**, to increasing your breastmilk supply in **Flow And Steady**, we hope you'll be able to take away and practice these tips at home. Heard of the term exclusive pumping? Read more about it in **Pump It Up**. To the working mothers who decide to pump at work, head over to **Tech It Easy** to check out breastfeeding gadgets worth investing.

Breastfeeding can be a breeze, and it can be also a pain. Two mothers open up about their challenges and how they manage to overcome them. Fathers may not be able to breastfeed, but their role and presence is invaluable too. Find out how fathers can support mothers in their breastfeeding journey in **Daddies, You're Needed Too!**

To those who are not planning to breastfeed, don't chuck this issue aside yet. Have a read and perhaps the stories featured may give you a new perspective and insights.

I wish all mummies a smooth and successful breastfeeding journey!

P.S. Need more tips and expert advice? Download our comprehensive Breastfeeding with Love e-guide here: <https://goo.gl/mgqQvO>. S

My best,



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Editorial Team

EDITOR

Michelle Ang

WRITERS

Rachel Lim, Som Yew Ya, Tan Yi Jun & Rachel Tan

FEATURED EXPERTS

Goh Shi Yu Diana (Madam Partum) & Ms Jophia Bok (Breastmilk.com.sg)

Art & Design

ART DIRECTOR

Michelle Ang

COVERPAGE MODEL

Aria Ng

PHOTOGRAPHY

Photography By Yew Kwang

Marketing & Advertising

MARKETING HEAD AND ADVERTISING

SALES DIRECTOR

Elaine Lau

For advertising enquiries, email us at advertise@thenewageparents.com

Web Administration

WEB DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR

Seow Poh Heng

If you wish to contribute to our e-guide, email us at mailbox@thenewageparents.com
 For past issues, go to <https://issuu.com/newagepregnancy>

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Latch On, Latch Off

How do you get your baby to latch on properly? Rachel Lim speaks to Staff and Lactation Nurse, **Jophia Bok.**

Latching your baby will be a better choice, especially from after delivery to 3-6 months postnatal, says Ms Bok. She outlines three main benefits of latching:

1. YOUR BABY WILL LEARN

Baby will learn patience and perseverance through latching. As baby

latches and under mummy's guidance, they will learn that milk will naturally flow (and achieve let-down) if they latch correctly and keep sucking.

2. YOUR BODY WILL ADJUST

Mummy's physical body responds positively and effectively when there

is constant skin-to-skin contact with her own baby. Your body will slowly adjust to the amount of breastmilk being produced that is sufficient for your growing baby. It is possible for mummy to achieve 2-3 let-down in one breastfeeding session.

3. HAVE BLOCKED DUCTS? LATCH MORE

When mummy is having blocked ducts or engorgement, the first line of action is to encourage her baby to latch on more often. Baby's proper latching will form a very good suction for the mummy's problem breast.

As baby is sucking, mummy should do a gentle massage on the blocked and painful area on her breast. This is to aid the thickened breastmilk to be broken up and pushed out of the nipple along the duct.

How To Get A Proper Latch

Ms Bok encourages new mummies not to panic and fuss around the baby when they cry for milk. This is because your baby will naturally amplify your emotions by crying more and more intensively. So, it is a good habit to keep calm.

“Gently acknowledge baby's need for milk and reassure baby that you are preparing yourself for your baby to latch on. As you are speaking to your baby, your actions of preparation must be quick,” shares Ms Bok.

Ms Bok shares the following tips to get your baby to latch on properly:

- If you are still getting used to breastfeeding, have someone else bring baby to you when you are in your comfortable position and waiting to receive baby.
- You can gently massage the breast that you are going to let baby latch on.
- Encourage baby to open their mouth by showing your own big mouth to baby.
- Position baby in the desired position. Make sure that baby has a good and straight head-body alignment.
- Use your nipple to touch baby's upper lips (to stimulate oral reflex), and if baby is hungry, they will open their mouth.
- As baby's mouth open wide, with tongue flat down, immediately cup baby's mouth over your nipple with only the rim of your areola (brown portion of the nipple) showing outside your baby's mouth. Their lips

should be flanged outwards. This is a good latch.

As baby is sucking, listen and watch for poor latch indicators like:

- Clicking sounds from baby's mouth
- Sucking of air into the mouth
- Baby's mouth is sucking at the tip of the nipple
- Baby's cheeks have a large 'dimple' as they are sucking
- You feel pain

Mistakes To Avoid While Latching Baby

Ms Bok highlights four main pitfalls to avoid during latching:

- 1.** Do not latch baby when baby does not open their mouth wide.
- 2.** Do not continue the latch if you feel pain throughout the breastfeeding session. You will develop a bad sore or bleeding nipples. Always unlatch with the proper technique and re-latch baby again.
- 3.** Try not to latch baby with nipple shields if you have not tried direct latching before. Usage of nipple shields may lead to other complications (e.g. blocked ducts in the breast around the rim of the shield) for most mummies.
- 4.** Do not disrupt your baby's breastfeeding session if they are latching and drinking well. It will break the momentum of the baby and baby may not be willing to continue feeding till sufficient.

Should I latch when I have breast complications such as cracked nipples, mastitis, blocked ducts or engorgement?

Breastfeeding can still be continued when mummy is experiencing such

issues. Latch as per normal, Ms Bok states. She provides pointers on how to tide over the pain.

For cracked, sore, bleeding nipples:

■ Ensure that the latch is proper in babies. “It will be very painful during the first minute of latching and as baby is sucking. However, the pain will not last throughout the breastfeeding session if the latch is proper,” she assures.

■ After each breastfeeding session, remember to use a clean dampened cloth to wipe the nipples. Then squeeze a little breastmilk and smear it over the nipples. Air dry them. You can also smear nipple cream sparingly after air drying your nipples.

■ You can cup a nipple shield over the problem nipples to prevent clothing from coming in contact with the sore nipples.

For breast infection or mastitis:

■ If your breastmilk shows streaks of pus, stop feeding on that breast and seek medical support.

■ Express milk every 2 hourly on the problem breast and discard the milk.

Ms Bok reiterates the rhetoric of early intervention being the best way to increase the chances of successful breastfeeding. “If you are in doubt, always approach a lactation consultant or a breastfeeding doctor for advice.”

For more tips and advice from Ms Bok, go to www.breastmilk.com.sg

Flow And Steady

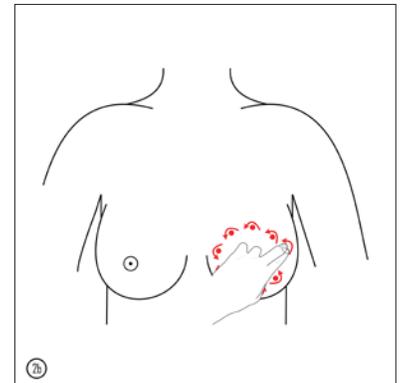
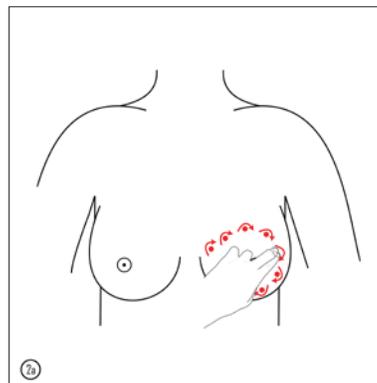
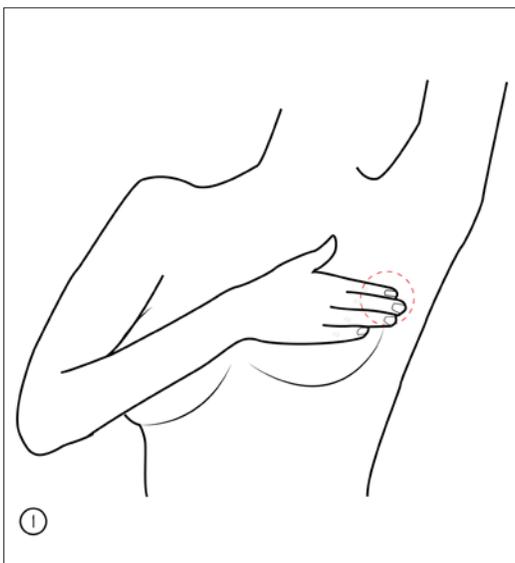
Need help to get your milk flowing? **Diana Goh, TCM Physician from Madam Partum** shows us simple breast massage techniques to increase your milk flow.



Expert: Goh Shi Yu Diana, TCM Physician from Madam Partum

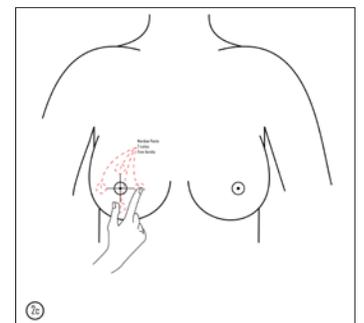
How to identify your blocked areas: Raise your left arm in the air and examine your left breast with your right hand, search around for knots, hard areas and blocked ducts. Do the same for the other side.

STEP 1: The lymph gland is the hard area you feel on your armpit. Start by ‘pumping’ your lymph gland in your left or right armpit for around **5 to 10 times** by applying pressure to the area, and releasing it. (image 1) You can use 2 to 4 fingers to press, as long as you feel the pressure. You will feel a little sore, but it means you are pressing it at the right spot.



STEP 2: Start by massaging in circular motions around your breast **clockwise 5 to 10 times**. (image 2a) You can start from the top of your breast, and move to the next point in a clock wise direction. Or start from the outside of your breast to the inside of your breast and **anti-clockwise 5 - 10 times**. (image 2b)

Apply pressure on the **4 meridian points**, which is about 2 inches above, below, left and right tip of your areola. Do this for about **5 to 10 times**. (image 2c)



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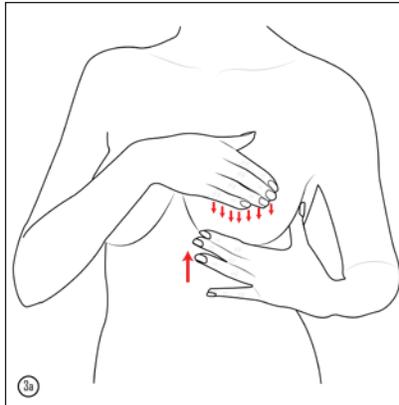
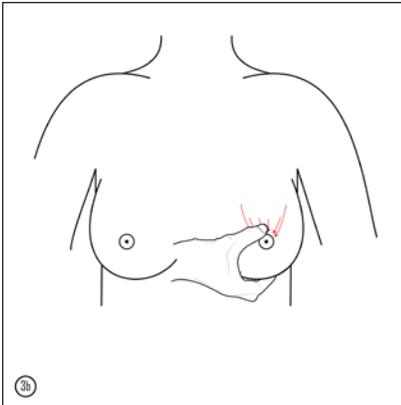
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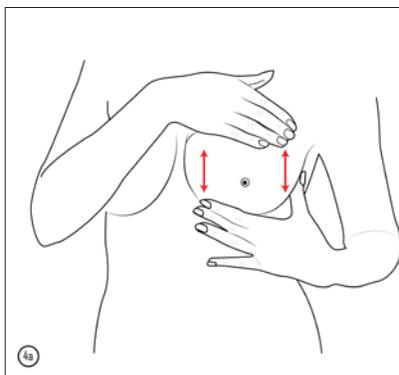
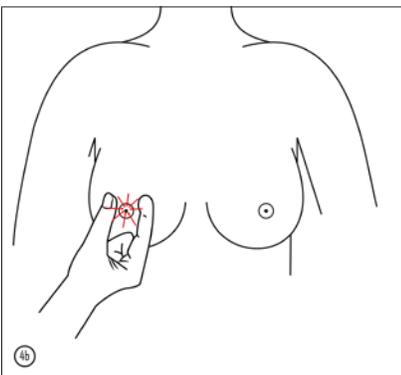
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STEP 3: Hold your breast with your left hand, apply some pressure upwards and use your right palm to stroke downwards from the top of the breast. (image 3a) Use your thumb to create more pressure by pushing downwards to push the milk into the ducts. (image 3b)



STEP 4: Cup the breast with both palms and move upwards and downwards for **3 to 4 times**. (image 4a) Squeeze the tip of your areola in all angles with index finger and thumb a few times until your milk drips. (image 4b) If using your index and thumb does not work, use your five fingers to do an outward pull motion.

Note: Do all the above steps on one side of your breast first before proceeding to the other side.

Q+A

Q: What causes blocked ducts?

Diana says: It could be the wrong way of latching, causing your breastmilk to be not able to drained completely. Infrequent or skipping your feedings results in sending wrong signals to the body to stop milk

production. Wearing a tight nursing bra or sleeping in a certain position can cause your ducts to be compressed or damaged too. Are you feeling stressed? Fatigue and stress may lower your body's production of oxytocin, the hormone that helps in the milk production. Not having enough fluids can also cause your milk

to be too thick, causing blockage in the ducts.

Q: How can I prevent blocked ducts?

Diana says: Consider changing your breastfeeding positions. Include moist hot compress for before and after breastfeeding, and have regular breastfeeding routines. Eat well and have plenty

of fluids. Although this can be quite hard with a newborn, try to rest as much as possible.

Q: What soups can I drink to help with my milk flow?

Diana recommends: Green Papaya Prolactin Soup cooked with Fish or Pig Trotters, which can be purchased at any Madam Partum outlets.

ENRICHMENT AND PRESCHOOL RESOURCE GUIDE 2016/2017

Indoor playgrounds

- eXplorerKid, Downtown East (E!Hub) & AMK Hub
- Cool de Sac, Suntec City Mall
- Happy Willow, One KM Mall & Fusionopolis

Enrichment centres and others

- Heguru Education Centre (One KM Mall, Sengkang Central and Waterway Point)
- Julia Gabriel Centre (The Forum)
- Gymboree (Tanglin Mall)
- YouLe Mandarin Centre (Tanglin Shopping Centre)
- LEAP SchoolHouse (City Square Mall & Pasir Ris)
- LEAP KIDS Preschool @ Jalan Lana
- LEAP KIDS Preschool @ Woodlands
- Genius R Us (City Square Mall & Westgate)
- Seriously Addictive Mathematics (Toa Payoh)
- The Party Stuff, The Central (Clark Quay), Velocity @ Novena Square & Tan Boon Liat Building

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and what's featured in the guide

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Is That Safe?



What you eat or put on your skin may affect your nursing infants.

Som Yew Ya tackles common queries breastfeeding mothers may ask.

Is it safe to... eat raw food and unpasteurized products?

There is no concern for consumption of raw foods such as cold cuts, deli meats, sushi, seafood, unpasteurized dairy items, uncooked eggs whilst breastfeeding. During pregnancy, the above food sources may pose potential food poisoning risks and should be avoided but they do not carry the same danger in breastfeeding mothers.

The reason why these foods are considered unsafe for pregnant women is because of the risk that they contain listeria, a foodborne disease-causing bacteria, says Dietitian Vanessa McNamara, from The Travelling Dietitian. Listeria cannot be passed through breastmilk, so it is safe for breastfeeding mothers to consume such food.

In cases where a mother gets sick from such foods, there is low to negligible risk to the infant. However it is important to note any reactions from the baby, or if there is pre-existing family allergies or eczema. Adjust your diet accordingly to eliminate any triggers to your baby.

Is it safe to... take caffeine?

Caffeine is safe for breastfeeding mothers, says Ms McNamara. However, it can be passed through breastmilk, and this might unsettle some babies more than others, particularly newborns. "If a baby is fussy and irritable, it is worth monitoring a mother's caffeine

intake to see if it is having an impact on their behaviour,"

It is difficult to suggest a safe amount of caffeine as all babies will react differently. Ms McNamara explains some babies may react to half a cup of coffee, while others may react to two cups. "This needs to be worked out by the mother but it is important to note the baby's sensitivity will most likely reduce as the baby gets bigger and older."

According to the Australian Breastfeeding Association, excessive caffeine consumption (this is subjective to each person) may face inhibition to their let-down reflex and affect the milk supply. Infants may also experience signs of upset, jitters, poor sleep or appear colicky. Babies with mothers who avoided caffeine during pregnancy may have higher sensitivity towards caffeine exposure during breastfeeding.

Is it safe to... eat processed foods?

Processed foods such as instant noodles and sausages are safe for consumption but are low in nutritional value. It is best to consume in moderation and make up for balanced diet in other areas.

Is it safe to... to take medicine?

It is crucial for mothers to inform their physicians who are prescribing drugs that they are breastfeeding. Double check the medication you receive and read the labels or prescription leaflet. If in doubt, the prescription leaflet accompanying each medicine should state whether

the medicine is contraindicated for lactating women. This would serve as a good reference. There are also lactation apps and web tools which may help to provide general information regarding safety categorisation of drug. However these only serve as a basic guide. Do seek professional medical advice for a personal condition if in doubt.

Is it safe to... smoke?

Smoking is harmful during pregnancy and the dangers are elevated in breastfeeding. Smoking before, during, or after the gestation of a baby; also known as maternal smoking, exposes the baby to the smoke as second hand and third hand smokers, and transfers nicotine to the baby via breastmilk. According to Quitday, an organization committed to supporting smokers to quit the habit, smoking inhibits the hormone prolactin and tobacco reduces the let-down reflex.

The National Health Service in England states smoking also increases risks of sudden infant death syndrome, as well as breathing problems, behavioral issues, ear disease and deafness. Efforts should be made to make the environment as smoke-free for the baby as possible.

Is it safe to... use cosmetics?

Topical products which contain salicylic acid, beta hydroxyl acid (BHA) are common in topical exfoliants, cleansers, toners, masks and peels. These chemicals can be

absorbed into breastmilk. Retinoids and vitamin A derivatives are found in sunscreens, whitening products, serums and creams. It is advisable not to use products containing such ingredients for breastfeeding women.

Dr Lynn Chiam, Dermatologist, Children & Adult Skin Hair Laser Clinic at Mt Elizabeth Novena Hospital states that it is generally safe for pregnant women to use make-up. However, precaution must be taken for certain ingredients found in make-up.

Parabens are environmental contaminants which can be used as preservatives in cosmetics and

healthcare products. Phenols, like benzophenone-3, are used in sun protection products. Triclosan, an antibacterial agent, is found in certain soaps.

Although further studies are needed to verify their effects on the unborn child, these substances may contribute to adverse health effects in mothers or their offspring. Dr Chiam explains, “Exposure to phenols, select parabens, and triclosans during pregnancy may be related to oxidative stress and inflammation, potential mechanisms by which exposure to these compounds may influence birth outcomes and other adverse health

effects.”

Chemical sunscreens should be avoided as they are absorbed into the skin as compared to natural mineral or fortified sunscreens which instead produces a water resistant barrier to pollutants. In extreme cases, side effects may result in defects or allergies in babies.

While the mode of application and the extent of exposure may determine whether a certain product causes effective harm to a baby, it pays to be cautious of the products mothers apply on the skin. Read labels carefully to check what you are using is safe for you and baby.



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Find out how being in the water can help them relax





“I was so badly engorged that it hurt to put on my clothes.”

Mummy blogger **Rachel Tan** (The Pleasure Monger) was adamant about breastfeeding her child. The mother of two shares the ups and downs of her breastfeeding journey.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF RACHEL TAN.

I breastfed my firstborn, Faith, for 21 months and my son, Ethan, for 23 months. To be honest, I did not think that I would breastfeed my children for more than a year each. I had planned to go back to work after giving birth to Faith, but that did not happen when the unthinkable did.

THE FIRST HURDLE

I had a plan hatched out right from the start and made sure to remind the midwife that I would like to try

latching Faith on right after she was born. In fact, I was so hyped up in anticipation of her first latch that I was left sorely disappointed when things went downhill after.

You see, the first latch constituted a rather anti-climatic moment and while other mothers in the maternity ward were making colostrum within hours to a day after giving birth, I made nothing. That meant Faith had nothing other than glucose solution for the first four days and I

felt absolutely gutted that I couldn't make milk soon enough for her.

I was so badly engorged to the point where it would hurt to put on clothes. The lactation consultant did everything she could to help me along. Massages, compresses, plying me with Mother's Milk Tea to stimulate milk production, helping me to latch Faith correctly so that my nipples wouldn't hurt. It was absolutely chaotic to have to deal with all that, aside from healing from the physical trauma of birth and waking up every 2-3 hours to latch Faith. I felt helpless once I was discharged because I still was not lactating by then.

CLOSE TO GIVING UP

I was close to giving up but my husband and paediatrician reminded me that Faith was doing okay on glucose solution and they reassured me that my milk would come in soon. True enough, by the fifth day, Faith was guzzling milk and the engorgement was gradually relieved with her intake and frequent massages and compresses.

The problem was my nipples were sore from the poor latch and it took quite a while for Faith and I to learn to get to know each other's anatomy well enough for the perfect latch to happen. In the meantime, breastmilk and nipple creams were the best medicine.

THE REFLUX

When Faith was about one month old, she started regurgitating milk. At first, we thought it was normal for babies to do so, until we realised that she would arch back and cry in pain whenever I brought her to my breast. The

paediatrician diagnosed her with reflux and we had to put her on medication to ease the pain from acids coming up her digestive tract. Nursing was a real struggle because she would be hungry and yet, she would be in pain if she feeds. That went on for about 3 months before she was well again.

The real trouble started when she refused to take milk from the bottle after we introduced it to her when she was 5 weeks old. She grew from pushing the teat out with her tongue to screaming at the mere sight of the bottle. Back then, no one could help me with her as my husband was working more than 100 hours a week, and I made the decision to be a stay-at-home mother. It was a difficult move to cut our income and to give up the career I was gunning for, but it is a decision that I did not regret.

SECOND TIME'S A CHARM?

With my son, it was a more or less the same experience except that it was twice the lethargy, having to take care of both kids on minimal sleep, and twice the torment as he had a much more severe form of reflux and was underweight. I was torn in trying to keep his weight up and keeping him pain-free; yet, he screamed in pain whenever he nursed.

The paediatrician eventually prescribed him with more potent medication to help with the reflux and urged me to start him early on solids at 4-5 months old, just to make sure he had a fair chance of putting on sufficient weight required for developmental milestones to happen. Whilst he is still smaller than his peers, we are happy to report that he is at least back on the growth chart.

Both of my children weaned off their last feeds on their own accord when they were almost two years old.

So what did I learn from breastfeeding two kids?

THINGS DON'T GO ACCORDING TO PLAN

We can plan to breastfeed for a long time or stop after a while, but things don't always go according to plan. It's best to take the cues from your children and assess your circumstance fairly before changing course.

WE SHOULD NEVER BE AFRAID TO SEEK HELP

Be it from a lactation consultant, your partner or paediatrician. In my case, I needed all three sources of help for me to breastfeed successfully.

IT TAKES SHEER GRIT AND SUPPORT TO LATCH EXCLUSIVELY

I was forced into that situation when my kids refused to take the bottle and I had no help to train them to get back on it. Having to latch exclusively meant that I couldn't be away from them and my husband was key to helping me mentally cope with the lack of breaks from the children.

All mothers should breastfeed. It's free and you don't have to worry about getting the consistency or temperature right when feeding your child. If you can incorporate breastfeeding into your lifestyle, schedule, and it works for you and your family, breastmilk is the perfect source of nutrition for your baby.

10 Reasons That Compelled Rachel To Breastfeed (And Why You Should Too!)

1. Breastmilk is free

I have heard of how parents go through tins and tins of formula, and how the expenses snowball to obscene amounts. I certainly didn't want to spend more money if I can help it. Bring on the open milk bar!

2. Less of a hassle

Once a good latch is established, just lift up your shirt and let baby drink up; the ease of breastfeeding comes in handy, particularly when you go on holidays with the baby. Nothing like lugging a steriliser, bottles, teats and tins of formula along to slow you down.

3. Easiest way to soothe a cranky baby

Your baby is bound to go through periods of fussing, during growth spurts, illness, teething and wonder weeks. As opposed to trying to rock or cradle the baby for countless hours on end to soothe him, it's really so much easier to offer the breast as a source of comfort and nutrition. That way, Mummy gets to sit back, relax and grab

some shuteye whilst nursing an otherwise inconsolable baby.

4. Don't have to calculate and mix

There is no need to calculate the amounts of formula milk powder and water to make up your baby's feeds. Breastmilk is an as-is source of nutrition that is available at all times to the baby.

5. The perfect source of nutrition

Breastmilk is the perfect source of nutrition that evolves with your baby's growth, at least for the first six months of his life. Breastmilk has the perfect mix of macro- and micro-nutrients,

as well as antibodies and probiotics; its constitution also changes with the stage of development to optimally meet your baby's needs, at least in the first six months. How clever is Mother Nature?

6. Breastmilk is always at the right temperature...

...when served fresh!

7. Breastmilk needs no preparation

This is a bonus when the baby is crying; it is simply easier to breastfeed and attend to your child immediately, than to fumble around with bottles and hot water in the middle of the night.

8. Breastmilk is very easily digested

The fact that breastmilk is so easily digested means that nutrients are better absorbed by the baby.

9. Breastmilk has antibacterial properties

There is lesser need to worry about contamination, especially when bottles and teats that may not be properly cleaned aren't involved!

10. Less worries about milk allergies

Formula milk is derived from different sources and may present allergens to babies. Breastmilk is designed to meet a baby's needs and there is really that much less to worry about when it comes to allergies.



Breastfeeding

A comprehensive e-guide for mothers

WITH LOVE

Ready, Latch, Go

Preparing for your
breastfeeding journey

Breastfeeding in Public

How a first time
mama did it

Pumping at Work

**MYTHS AND
MISCONCEPTIONS**

Q+A

WITH OUR EXPERTS



“I breastfed my son with my blistered and sore nipples.”

Breastfeeding turned out to be more painful than what **Yen Lim** had expected. But that did not deter her from stopping. Find out what the Founder and Director of Madam Partum did to overcome her pain.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF YEN LIM.

Staying Positive

Before my first-bon Ethan was born (now 6 years old), I wanted to have at least 6 months of exclusive breastfeeding as recommended by World's Health Organisation. I did lots of reading to equip myself with the necessary knowledge. I wanted to be prepared for what is to come. I know that good milk flow cannot be established immediately. It needs to be built up slowly.

My milk flow only came in after the fourth day. It was very slow at 10-20ml per 3 hours interval. As I was aware that there is colostrum in the baby's stomach, I was not stressed during the initial early breastfeeding days. I kept a positive mindset and hanged in there for at least a month.

I had to stop breastfeeding Ethan at the 7th month as I was planning to



conceive again. I breastfed my second child Emma, who is now 5 years old, for a year.

It might surprise you

Although breastfeeding is part of life, it certainly didn't come naturally to me. To produce milk overnight when you have not done so for the past 20 years of your life is not a simple task.

The initial first month of breastfeeding was the most difficult and stressful period. I had breast engorgement which brought immense pain. It was also tough to think that I could not produce enough milk for my children. It did not help that my children were also fussing constantly because they were not well fed.

It was so painful to the point that I would cringe every time my first-born son cried because I knew I would need to breastfeed him with my blistered and sore nipples. I really dreaded feeding time. However, I persevered. I was surprised with my own tolerance to pain and my own determination to not give up!

I also consulted my father who is a Chinese Physician and also researched on specific meridian points and breast massage techniques. I performed thousands of clockwise and anti-clockwise

circular strokes around those meridian points and blocked lumps. The massages were highly effective. In a matter of a few days, I had no more engorged breasts and my milk flow increased tremendously.

Having benefitted from the Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) lactation massage, I wanted to help all mothers out there who were also struggling with breastfeeding. I am confident that TCM lactation massage will help all mothers in clearing milk ducts and increasing their milk flow. That is why we created a holistic TCM programme just for mothers in their pre and post-partum care and well-being at Madam Partum.

For mothers returning to work

I would advise mothers to speak to their employers once they are expecting, to discuss the options of maternity leave arrangements and also about their intention to pump at the office. It is helpful to highlight the need for a pumping space.

Assure your employers that the pumping time will not eat into your working hours. This can be done by shortening your own lunch time. Seeking

support and understanding from colleagues is another important factor. Communicate with them, and show your appreciation through your actions or words.

I planned ahead by letting my kids learn to alternate between bottle feed and direct latching before I went back to work. I used a dual electric pump which is battery operated at work. I would then have my kids latch and breastfeed whenever I am with them at home. In this way, the milk flow will be kept consistent.

I cut two holes in my sports bra to hold my breast shield and pump in place. This way, I can go hands-free to catch some sleep or be on my mobile phone.

Yen's breastfeeding mantra

Breastmilk is the best form of nutrition for babies. If you want to lose weight, breastfeed! However, it is also a personal choice. There should not be stress or peer pressure on you to breastfeed, and we should respect others if they choose not to breastfeed.





DADDIES, YOU'RE NEEDED TOO!

Fathers may not be able to breastfeed, but their role and presence is invaluable too. Here's how fathers can support mothers in their breastfeeding journey.

BY SOM YEW YA

Be Physically Present

In the initial 4 to 6 weeks, it is best for babies to nurse directly from the breast. Bottle-feeding with expressed milk can come later, when the routine of breastfeeding has been established between mother and baby.

La Leche League International, a non-profit group which provides resources and support for breastfeeding women, suggests that fathers can spend time observing their babies and get tuned-in to their needs and cues. Bottle



feeding is one way fathers can connect with baby, but this should not be rushed.

Physical contact is another way to bond. Dads can try to place the breastfed baby on his chest – where the baby can hear the heart beat and listen to his breathing and voice. Rocking the baby on the shoulder, slinging the baby, or just spending time with baby can be as rewarding.

Show Support

A husband's support and approval to breastfeed contributes strongly to a mother's decision and duration to breastfeed. According to the American Academy of Family Physicians, a

mother's perception of her husband's attitude towards breastfeeding affects her choice greatly even if the perception may not be correct.

Fathers who come across as ambivalent, preferring formula, or seem to be resentful to breastfeeding may discourage mothers to breastfeed. Taking time to make the decision during pregnancy increases the likelihood to continue breastfeeding, as opposed to making the decision after birth.

In the initial weeks, when new mothers are sleep deprived or lack the confidence to breastfeed, a father can truly encourage by deflecting criticisms and providing a conducive environment for the mother.

My husband has been integral in my breastfeeding process. He ensured I had enough back and leg support while I breastfed, and is an expert when it comes to sterilising bottles, thawing and warming milk. It helped very much that we were on the same page because whenever we met with an obstacle, it was always about looking for a solution on how we can continue to breastfeed.

Be Informed

Fathers who are well-informed and knowledgeable about breastfeeding will find it easier to support the mother-infant breastfeeding relationship. Those who have attended breastfeeding or postpartum classes are more likely to promote exclusive breastfeeding or maternal milk within the first 3 months.

Most hospitals in Singapore provide antenatal classes which include tips on breastfeeding. There are also lactation consultants who provide services. These are usually complimentary prior to discharge. Check with the hospital if

you are making an enquiry for such a service. Keep a look out for educational talks and workshops by hospitals or baby brands in the month of August, as it is the Breastfeeding Awareness week.

Nurturing A Different Kind Of Relationship

It is common for fathers of breastfeeding babies to experience frustration and inadequacy when they are unable to calm crying babies on their own. But it is important for fathers not to see their role as a “stand-in mother”. Fathers contribute to the development of their babies in a different way.

Dr William Sears, a renowned paediatrician, shared his own experience with his sixth child, Matthew. In what he termed ‘father-nursing’, he carried Matthew on a sling and neck-nestled him. As the father's body is different, with more noticeable voice vibrations, babies can feel the difference and enjoy the familiarity and presence of a father.

So make full use of your paternity leave and be there. Because daddies, you *are* needed too.

Paternity Leave Entitlement in Singapore

All working fathers in Singapore are eligible for one week of mandatory Government-Paid Paternity Leave (GPPL). A new rule has been legislated and it is now mandatory for employers to provide the second week of paternity leave to fathers of citizen children born from 1 January 2017 onwards. For more information, go to www.mom.gov.sg.

Breastmilk is the primary source of food for baby and contains the most nutritional benefits. Need to boost your milk supply? Try these natural remedies.

BY TAN YI JUN

1. OATS

Did you know that eating oats help to stimulate Pitocin, the hormone that is responsible for milk-making? Besides being high in iron, oats also provide vast amounts of nutrients such as protein, fibre and carbohydrate, which will help increase the quality and amount of breastmilk. Sprinkle a hand full of oats in your breakfast such as your milk or yogurt and have them as snacks. If you love to bake, you can even try baking your very own lactation cookies using oats.

2. GARLIC

Here's a fun fact, garlic and other spices can cause your breastmilk to have an 'appealing flavour'. Researchers Julie Mennella and Gary Beauchamp performed a study where a group of mothers breastfeeding their babies were given a garlic pill, while another group were given a placebo. It was found that the babies nursed longer, sucked harder, and drank more garlic-scented milk than those who had no garlic exposure. The taste and smell of garlic may not be favourable for everyone. The good news is you can now get garlic supplements.

3. FENUGREEK SEEDS

Fenugreek is a commonly known galactagogue (food that promotes the

flow of a mother's milk). Fenugreek seeds and leaves are great source of nutrients such as iron calcium, Omega-3 fats, vitamins as well as minerals which are beneficial for baby's growth and brain development. You can consume fenugreek in the form of tea.

4. NUTS

Nuts are the best snacks for pregnant women and breastfeeding mothers as they are loaded with proteins and good fats. They contain amino acids which aid the development of serotonin, a neurotransmitter that is crucial for producing breastmilk. Almonds, cashews and macadamia nuts are the best choices for breastfeeding mothers as they are a rich source of Omega-3 and fats. Feel peckish? Have a bag of unflavoured nuts with you throughout the day to snack on.

5. GREEN PAPAYA

Green papaya is another widely known as galactagogue, especially in Asia. Green papaya aids in oxytocin, a hormone in a mother's body that regulates milk production. Rich in vitamins, folate and minerals, eating green papaya will also improve the quality of your breastmilk. You can shred green papaya into thin strips and add them to your salad, similar to the famous Thai Green papaya salad dishes, or cook them in soups.

6. SESAME SEED

Sesame seeds (white and black) are packed with calcium and micro-nutrients. Black sesame seeds are known to be more nutritious than their white counterparts. Sprinkle them on your dishes, or on oats and cereals, or you can use sesame seed oil in your cooking.

7. BARLEY

It's important to keep yourself hydrated so that your body is able to generate more milk. Barley is a lactogenic food (foods with lactation-promoting properties) as it contains tryptophan, an amino acid that is part of most proteins which has been linked to better milk flow. You can add cooked barley into your bowl of oats for breakfast, or keep yourself hydrated by boiling your own barely water.

8. CARROTS

Besides being an excellent source of vitamin A, carrots also contain beta-carotene, which helps to boost breastmilk supply and offer our body with healthy carbohydrates. You can juice it and drink it, eat it raw or add it to your usual dishes.

9. CUMIN SEEDS

If garlic is too strong for you, here's another spice to consider for that added 'flavour' to your breastmilk. Cumin seeds are commonly used as a seasoning to add flavour to the dishes. A source of iron, cumin seeds can help resolve digestive issues and relief bloating and constipation. Apart from using it as seasoning, you can add boiled cumin seeds into a cup of milk as a bedtime drink.

Pump It Up

The act of breastfeeding may not be viable for some mothers. Does it mean their baby can no longer drink breastmilk? **Som Yew Ya** explores another possibility.

The hardships of breastfeeding may be made possible with professional help. But incompatibility with lifestyle and other combined factors can make breastfeeding almost impossible. Mothers can bridge this gap by pumping exclusively.

WHAT IS EXCLUSIVE PUMPING?

Exclusive pumping is using a breast pump to induce and maintain lactation, as opposed to breastfeeding your baby directly. The main benefit of exclusive pumping is that your baby will still be able to receive the benefits of your breastmilk. You can still bond



you're your baby as you bottle feed them.

Planning to pump exclusively for your baby? Here are pointers to note.

■ It takes time and logistics

Pumping is not immediate like latching. Whether you feed your baby on demand or by schedule, you need to prepare and plan your path. When and how often do you sterilise your bottles? What time of the day will you pump? And where will you be when it's time to pump? Prepare sterilised bottles on hand just in case you need to use them.

■ Determination and effort

Because your baby does not suckle your breast, the maintenance of your milk supply is solely based on the frequency and extent your breasts are emptied. Pumping also relies on self-discipline. You will need determination and will power to pump around the clock to maintain your supply. It may be easy to forget when work is busy or when a proper pumping space is hard to find.

■ Going out

Freshly pumped breastmilk can only last for about 4 hours at room temperature. The local weather does not help either. You will need to plan your route ahead and find out if there is a conducive and hygienic place to pump. Ask around to find out if there's a nursing room available to where you are headed to. Don't forget to bring along your pump, sterilised bottles and ice cooler if you are going to be out for a few hours.

Maintaining Your Milk Supply

START EARLY

Start pumping early if you have decided that this is going to be your baby's main mode of feeding. You may yield only a few drops at the start, but supply will pick up if you keep at it. Excess milk can be refrigerated for later use.

PLAN AHEAD

In the early weeks, where feeding is very frequent, you have to plan ahead of your baby. Sterilise your bottles, make sure you have enough breastfeeding storage bags, and a good trusted pump. This is especially so if you are feeding on demand.

MAINTAIN A SCHEDULE

Pump every 2.5 to 3 hours consistently to get your establish your supply. If your supply is low, you can try to increase your pumping frequency by 15 minutes. You should not exceed 10 pumping sessions in a day.

FIND YOUR MOTIVATION

It may be very isolating to spend so much time pumping on your own. You could be spending 4 to 6 hours in a day. You can designate a special corner or room in your home as your 'pumping corner'. Tune in to

your favorite music, watch your current favourite drama or read a book. Join a breastfeeding support group to surround yourself with like-minded mummies.

SET SMALL GOALS AND REVIEW

What is your goal? How long do you plan to pump? For example your goal can be to pump exclusively for a month. After that month, evaluate your progress and decide your next goal.

Discouraging or negative thoughts or comments may come while you pump. Don't be affected or disheartened by such thoughts. It takes time to build up your supply and establish a routine. And remember, there will be good and bad days too. Don't expect yourself to get it within the first week.

But if pumping is getting you down and your mood is getting heavier each day, hit the pause button and take a step back to evaluate. Be honest with yourself if this is working for you. "Is this working for me? Why do I feel so unhappy whenever I have to pump my breastmilk?" Self-care is important too.

Tech It Easy

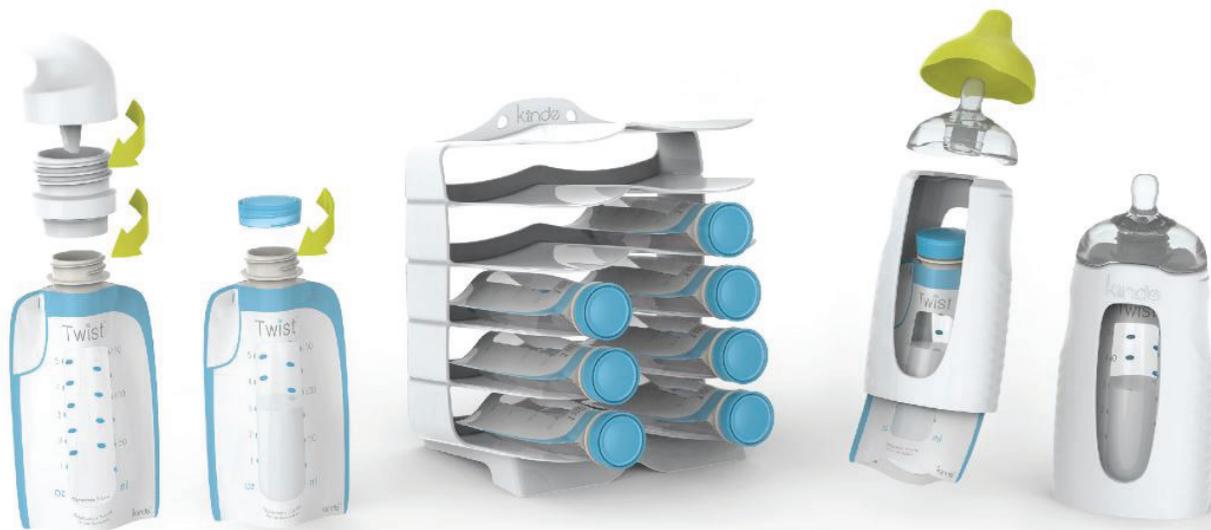
With technology's help, breastfeeding is now made easier. We list down 3 breastfeeding inventions worth investing.

BREASTFEED HANDS-FREE

With the **Freemie Freedom Deluxe Set** (SGD\$299) you can now express your milk hands-free. The Freemie Freedom Delux Set consists of an electric pump and Freemie Collection Cups which can be concealed under your clothes and into your bra. The breastmilk expressed will be contained in the two 8oz collection cups, where it can be poured easily into a bottle. The breast pump is also designed to operate with minimal sound, allowing you to express even at work.

WHERE TO BUY:
Pupsik Studio





A MULTI-PURPOSE STORAGE BAG

Breastfeeding process is not all about expressing and latching, it also involves proper storage of your milk and feeding your little one. The storing and feeding process can be tedious and time consuming. This is where **Kiinde Breast Milk Storage**

Twist Starter Kit (USD\$18.88) comes to the rescue.

With the Twist Starter Kit, everything can be done using the same pouch. This is made possible with the help of the Kiinde Direct-Pump™ adapters and Twist Pouches™ which can be attached to all major breast pump brands, allowing your

milk to be expressed directly into the pouches.

After warming the milk stored in The Kiinde Twist Pouches™, it can then be fitted into the Squeeze Natural Feeding bottle along with the Active Latch Nipple to become a feeding bottle. Great and handy for travels!

WHERE TO BUY: Amazon

WEAR AND PUMP UNDERCOVER

Similar to the Freemie breast bump, **Willow Wearable Breast Pump** (USD\$429) allows you to pump hands-free. But Willow takes it a step further. There are no tubes, external cords or dangling bottles. All the essential parts are built in the Willow pump itself. The milk expressed will be collected in the internal milk storage bag. With this feature, you can easily slide the Willow Wearable Breast Pump beneath your top and into your bra. Plus it's designed to operate quietly.

With such features, pumping on-the-go doesn't sound so impossible anymore. The cherry on top? It senses your senses your let-down and automatically transitions to expression phase based on your body's own unique milk production and timing. Every aspect of Willow, from the pump's smart design to the milk-tracking app, is designed to keep you in the know. Willow Wearable Breast Pump is set to be launched this Spring in U.S. **FORMORE INFO, GO TO** <https://shop.willowpump.com>





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